CHAPTER IV

THE TENT AND ITS FURNISHINGS

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TENT

The tent is made of pieces of coarse black cloth known as *šukka* (pl., *šḳak*). The *šukka* is usually 60 to 70 centimeters broad and 15 to 60 *ḏrâ'* (11.4 to 45.6 meters) long. The tent cloth is woven either of pure black goat's hair — both the heavy variety, *ša'ar ṣâfi*, and the light, *nôl*, being used — or else of cotton, with which only a small amount of goat's hair is blended, this being called *kumbok*. The weaving of tent material is carried on by many inhabitants of the towns and villages, and the Rwala buy it from itinerant traders, Rḥejbâwijjât or Kbejsât, or from those who make it. An ordinary tent with one main pole, which is about twelve meters long and nearly four meters broad, requires at least eight *šḳak*, each 15 *ḏrâ'* (11.4 meters) in length. If they are of pure goat's hair, *ša'ar ṣâfi*, 1 *šukka* costs 8 *meǧidijjât* ($7.20); if they are of *kumbok*, a *šukka* costs 3 *meǧidijjât* ($2.70); a *šukka* of *nôl* costs 5 *meǧidijjât* ($4.50). The back wall, *rwâḳ*, of such a tent costs 3 *meǧidijjât*; the lower part, *sefle*, of it, 1 *meǧidijje* (90 cents); 15 *ḏrâ'* (11.4 meters) of a narrow strip of goat's hair for strengthening the tent material, *ṭarâjeż*, costs 2 *meǧidijjât* ($1.80); two poles cost 9 piasters (40½ cents); and then there are the ropes, sold by weight: 1 *roṭol* (1.56 kilograms) for 13 piasters (58½ cents). Thus the smallest tent made of heavy goat's hair costs at least 33 *meǧidijjât* ($ 29.70). Every four years, or five years at the most, a new tent has to be set up.

When a man has bought the tent material, he hands it over to the women, who sew the tent under the supervision of an experienced old woman. The old woman gives the following directions: "Draw the separate pieces, *šḳak*, close together, *ṣaffenhen*; sew them with coarse threads of goat's hair, *ǧajjefenhen*; in the middle sew on the *ḳoṭb* [a small round board measuring about ten centimeters in diameter and having in the middle a circular opening cut out, through which the top

354 When the tent owner has sat down with his guests,
calls to his sons or slaves: "Dig out the fireplace, *ehefrû l*
[554 *nâr*." With the more important chiefs the fireplace is alwa
463] dug by a slave, who is entrusted with the preparation of t
coffee. The fireplace consists of a rectangular or circular h
about twenty centimeters deep, from the size and form
which it is possible years afterwards to judge with certain
412 to which chief the tent belonged. It is dug with an impleme
332 called *fâz*, which at one end terminates in a mattock and
the other end in a hatchet and is fastened on a long wood
354 helve; the double hoe, having at one end a mattock and
the other a pick, is called *ḳaddûm* or *tubal*. The ordina
354 Rwejli digs a smaller fireplace, which is nearer the front ed
of the tent. In the cold season the fireplace is close to t
carpets for the guests, while in the hot season it is abo
the middle of the men's compartment. The clay which is d
out is thrown into a heap near the hole forming the firepla
ḳufrat an-nâr, and just below the edge of the tent. On it
[574] shaken the ashes from the fireplace. The larger this he
known as *nefîle*, the more hospitable is the owner of the te
for coffee is prepared for the guests on the fireplace in t
men's compartment only and beside the fire the guests m
372 warm themselves. Beside the fireplace is placed a pile of fu
consisting of dry roots and stalks of various plants, *ḳaf*
and dry camels' excrements. The best fuel is the dry wo
of the *rṯṯm* shrubs. It gives off scarcely any smoke, thro
out a great heat, and holds the glowing embers for seve
hours before subsiding. The worst fuel consists of the dry
which blazes up with a bright red flame, crackles as if gu
powder had been scattered on it, but it does not form emb
[462] and does not maintain the heat. The fuel is collected by t
female slaves and women. If the chief has not a sufficie
supply of fuel, he sends to the surrounding tents for it,
the men themselves bring it to him.

FURNISHINGS OF THE WOMEN'S COMPARTMENT

353 The women and the slaves carry all the utensils and v
sels into the women's compartment. Carpets and coverlets
which to sleep are placed in the corner against the div
[251] ing wall. Sacks containing wheat, barley, dates, butter, s
sugar, coffee, rice, or *tummen* (a kind of rice), are stored
against the back wall.

Z:Musil S-4,5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

The Rwala add to the last verse:

Jistidhel at-tumbâk miṯl eben ḥaḏḏâl
alli jaṣurrek bimṣûni redûnek.

He cannot live without tumbac, like Eben Ḥaḏḏâl,
Who ties it even into the folds of his sleeves.

Fahad eben Ḥaḏḏâl, the head chief of the 'Amkrât, who camp on both sides of the middle Euphrates, like many other chiefs carried his water pipe on his camel even when migrating or on long marches. During the short halts, when waiting for the pack camels to come up, he would pour water into the pipe from a small pouch, put some moistened and crushed tumbac in the bowl, lay a red coal on top of it, and smoke. Such smokers usually have the tumbac tied in the lappets of their long shirt sleeves. An inveterate smoker of tumbac is generally punished with asthma.

WEAPONS

In every camp there are men employed in hunting. The duty of some of them is to supply the chief with meat for a strictly fixed sum. Such men always carry an old gun and ammunition with them. The ammunition belt, *maḫṭar*, is made of stout leather, *sîr*, to which two leather straps, *ǧudâ*, are sewn behind; passing over the shoulders like suspenders, they are crossed over the breast and hooked by two iron clasps, *ḥalaq*, to the belt in front. To each suspender, *ǧenâḥ*, two burnished copper tubes, *teṭâriṭ*, for powder are fastened. On the right of the belt the scabbard, *ǧwe'*, of a dagger, *ḥibrîǧǧe*, with an ornamented grip, *uḍêb*, is sewn; here also is tied a pouch, *waḫwaṭ*, containing lead bullets, small shot, *rudâd*, and caps, *ḫubsûn*. A hunter who does not carry his powder in the copper tubes, keeps it behind his belt in a small horn, *ḫarn aṣ-ṣuḫûr*, made of zinc or brass. Fastened to the belt with a long thin chain or leather cord is a large clasp knife, *ḫanṣa*, used in cutting the throat of the captured game, so that the blood may flow out. The rifles used by the hunters have caps and even obsolete flint locks.

For fighting, the Rwala have rifles of *ap-pum'*, *al-Ḥâdhi*, and Mauser makes. Among the common Bedouins before the World War the *pum'*, an old English military gun, was the most

popular. A genuine one cost 40 to 45 *mejidijjât* ($36-$40.50) and was imported chiefly from Egypt; an imitation, *tajjârijje*, which came from India, sold for 28 to 30 *mejidijjât* ($25.20-$29). The *šâhâni* is a Turkish military rifle, a Martini; the *wuww sunâi* kind of *šâhâni* could be bought for 50-60 *mejidijjât* ($45-$54), the *wuww ḫasfi* variety for 40-50 *mejidijjât* ($36-$45). All modern rifles are called Mausers by the Bedouins. Breechloaders are not liked by the Rwala and the rifles fitted with breechblocks, *uwwa-p-pbe'*, are less sought after than those without. The original Mausers, especially the Mannlichers, cost 50-60 *mejidijjât* ($45-$54); the imitations, *tajjâri*, were sold for as much as 20 *mejidijjât* ($18) less. All arms were brought from the seaports of Jidda or al-Kwejt. During my stay with Prince an-Nûri he was visited by six trade caravans with war munitions. One of the caravans numbered 210 camels carrying more than a thousand rifles with many thousand rounds of cartridges as well as much lead, gunpowder, and many caps. In the camp of every tribe an expert mechanic may be found, who can repair guns and manufacture cartridges.

From time to time both the sons and negroes of the chiefs practice shooting. Their target, *niššân*, generally is a black stone, a stick with a kerchief tied to it, or an old piece of clothing. The best marksman is rewarded by the chief with the head of the first camel he slaughters. *Ramje* (pl. *rumi*) signifies a report, a shot. "*Bârûdi 'araft rumîha*" means "I know the reports of my rifle; "*w-allâh rumîha sên*," "she shoots well." A *binduḳ* is a *bârûd* rifle with a flintlock or caps and is always feminine.

Mâ' binduḳen laṭpât fammiha jepebni
laha 'ale ḫafwa-l-mejammaḳ mardmi.

A rifle, the reports of whose mouth help me to reach my aim
And whose shots are destined for many a feathered one.

The words for bullet are *jalâṭi, rbâ'i, ḫmâsi, sittîn* — the last being of the largest caliber. *Šâšḫâne*, or *šâšḫân*, are old rifles whose barrels are five or six-angled on the inside. If the barrel is round, or at least smooth, it is called *ḫamre*. *Binduḳijje* are men armed with *binduḳ* rifles.

Of the ancient weapons the spear, sword, saber, and dagger still survive. The spear, *rumḥ*, consists of a steel or

Composed by Fejḥân eben Ża'ed eben Zrejbân, the chief of the Dowšân clan of the Mṭejr tribe in Neǧd. The reciters were Mḥammad al-Ḳaṣîb, 'Abdallâh al-Maṭrûd, and Ḥmâr abu 'Awwâd. In one of the camps which he rode through when returning from a raid Fejḥân happened to see a woman whose beauty dazzled him. For months he tried to forget her but in vain. Then he sent this poem to his friend 'Abdallâh eben Sbejjel, who was living in the settlement of Nefi, which is tributary to the Dowšân, with a request to find her camp and also to inquire whether the woman would marry him.

Verse 1. Fejḥân's messenger accompanied a large caravan, called *ḥadra*, which had set out from the inner desert for the lower Euphrates to buy food, clothing, and ammunition. 2. Traveling in the *ḳejẓ* season, midsummer, is most fatiguing for the she-camels. *Sawdeu*, they went up, signifies that the caravan was already on its way back, because the trip towards the Euphrates is expressed by the verb *ḥadaren*, they went down. Mrêṭbe and aṭ-Ṭanâdi are large watering places near the settlement where 'Abdallâh was then living. 3. 'Abdallâh furnished the Dowšân and their chief with everything they needed. Every large clan has a purveyor of this kind. 7. Iblîs is the tempting angel, not Satan. 8. In many tribes it is customary to pick up a pebble from the grave of a friend and to throw it aside so as to lighten the burden. On the grave of a girl or woman they also lay the three stones, *ḥwâdi*, that held the kettle in which the deceased cooked in her last days. Another custom is to sacrifice a goat or sheep on the grave; some then smear the stones with the blood of the sacrificed animal, others strew over them a handful of sand.

1. *Já ṣâṭri ḫobbi maḥâri ṭomijje*
   jowm eǧlaḥazzat miṯl ḫadd al-ḥdâni
2. *ḫobbi ṭomijje w-al-fejâẓ al-'aǧijje*
   w-tanaḥḥeri berzân zejn al-meḥâni
3. *ana ḳzejt al-ḥâzem alli 'alejje*
   al-ḥâzem alli má ḳṣâ al-ḥedâni
4. *al-ǧedi ḫaṭṭejteh bwarč al-maṭijje*
   w-mutnaḥḥeren jamm shejl al-jemâni
5. *bâri nidâr aṭ-ṭiflet al-'aswaǧijje*
   riḥat nesemha ǧazebâd al-'omâni
6. *má li 'ala-ṭ-ṭajjeb w-lá leh 'alejje*
   allâh jeṭûm ǧwejhebi má ṭunâni

539[x] good looks. The enraged father seized the poor fellow and had his sexual organ crushed. Since that time Ṣanḳûr had been demented.

[463] Verse 3. *Ḥafîb* is a man who teaches religion, sometimes leads the prayers, explains the Koran, etc., but is at the same time employed in some handicraft or engaged in trade. 4. *Má jehâ' beh* means "he fears or trembles before nobody." *Howz*, according to the Bedouins, is a deep leather trough standing on three legs and used for watering camels; the settlers use the word for a walled-in cistern for holding rain water. When water is needed, the *ḥowz* is the place to seek it. *Howz al-mauâja*, a place where death is drunk, is a battle field. He who dares to enter the battle field knows that death awaits him there. 5. To avenge Sâlem two thousand of the enemy should have been killed. 6. *Zebâb* is a dense cloud of dust, like *'aǧâǧ*. In 7 the poet asks for vengeance. 9. The sons of Jacob asserted that Joseph had been torn in pieces by wolves. Jacob complained bitterly to Allâh of this crime. Allâh then lent these beasts the gift of speech, and, coming to Jacob, they proved their innocence by witnesses.

In Honor of Muḥammed Eben Rašîd

1. *Já ḥejk jâ-ḥal ḫâlijât al-mezâḥib*
   ḥeǧnen telâfa min ba'îd al-maṣîbe
2. *ḥejb al-ṣawâreb sâjiǧât al-maḥâżib*
   elfên maḥdûdât kill ḥien teǧîbeh
3. *alli 'alejhen muštâḥin al-ma'âżib*
   ḥâmow ḥrâ'i musnaden jirtaḥi beh
4. *le'akob ḫallen jâfeǧǧ al-'arâżib*
   linâr 'abdallâh jewaḳḳed leḥîbeh
5. *ḥâmow limin fât al-awâdem 'ala-ṭ-ṭîb*
   aṣ-ṣajrami killen lafa'leh devi beh
6. *ḫorren ḫaber bi'âlijât al-marâżib*
   faḫḫaǧ 'ala-l-fetḫân min zawd ṭîbeh
7. *low jiltaḥi ḥaṭṭ al-awâdem ḥawâṭib*
   ṣaṣben bḥadd aṣ-seif ṣalben ṣalîbeh
8. *min al-biż jaḥjen leh 'ajûn at-teḥâbîb*
   w-al-miltebeh jinḥaǧ 'ala ḥebbeh jaǧî beh
9. *ḥandt má dabbar 'alejhen betaḥsîb*
   w-lâ ḫâjelen werd ad-debeî min 'aźîbeh

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

231 since it is universally known that the enemy always tries
556 first to capture the pure white animals. The reputation and glory, *'urf w-nowmâs*, of a clan depends chiefly on its white herd, for which reason the *marâfir* herdsmen are selected from the most prudent and brave youths, and at a time of particular danger this herd is usually driven to a safe hiding place. Furthermore, a pure white animal is killed only when
[237] too old or wounded. Its hair is carefully gathered by the women and girls for weaving the finest bags carried on the camel saddles.

PASTURING OF CAMELS

233 The camels pasture in either small or large herds. A herd up to ten heads is called *ḥeśle* (pl., *ḥâel*); a larger one, *ra'ijje* (pl., *ra'âja*) or *ḳuṭ'a* (pl., *ḳuṭ'ân*); if a herd numbers seventy to eighty animals it is known as *zoud*. A little herd owned by a small family is called *ǧwejd*.

233 Each herd has its own herdsman, *râ'i al-bel*, who is hired
●463 for ten months and, according to the size of the herd, is paid either two *meǧidijjât*, a suit of clothing, and shoes, or merely
465 six *meǧidijjât*, besides receiving one young male camel, either
554 a *maḫlûl*, a *mafrûd*, or even a *ḥeżż*. It is also his duty to help with the loading and unloading and to bring all the water needed. The herdsman addresses his employer as his host, *mu'azzeb*. Many herdsmen enjoy great esteem, and the hosts undertake nothing without asking their advice.

233 In the morning the herdsman gets a warm breakfast — usually warmed-over remains from the supper. While he is eating, the herd grazing near by is watched by the host himself, or by his son or daughter, *jeṣâḥihen*. Having breakfasted, the herdsman sticks a piece of bread or a handful of boiled wheat into his clothing, throws a pouch filled with water over his shoulder, takes a heavy staff, *maǧrûb*, mounts the leading she-camel, *ḳa'ûda*, and begins to praise the pasture in short sentences, which he intones in a drawling manner, *jeḥdeb leḥen*. On hearing his voice, the animals cease grazing and follow his lead. His she-camel, the *ḳa'ûda*, keeps always in the rear. Having thus all the animals of his herd before him, the herdsman drives them to the pasture, *jesraḥ* (or *jeṣallî*) *bel-ba'ria jamm al-mafla'*. The animals of a herd going to the pasture, *aṣ-ṣarî es-sâreḥ*, usually form a single line,